

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Attached is an annotated sheet and replacement sheet to Fig. 1.

Attachment: Annotated Sheet
Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

This Amendment, filed in reply to the Office Action dated November 22, 2006, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-21 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicant hereinabove amends claim 15 to obviate the rejection.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 3 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant hereinabove amends the claims to obviate the Section 112 rejections.

III. Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-10, 12-17, and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Li et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,930,783). Applicant respectfully submits the following comments in traversal of the prior art rejections. The Examiner has not rejected claims 4, 11 and 18 on the merits. Therefore, Applicant submits that these claims should be deemed allowable over the art.

Applicant's invention relates to comparison of similarity between images. Such comparisons allow a determination as to whether an image is an illegal copy. In this connection, comparisons are done across images based on characteristics of objects included in the images, and based on the object characteristics, similarity between the images is judged.

Turning to the cited art, Li relates to an image search device for image databases. Li includes a sequence of applying search criteria including 1) semantics based search, 2) a drawing-based search, 3) a relative positioning of the results of searches 1 and 2 and a ranking of the results of 1-3. Thus, the search 1 may include identifying all images that include a person. The search 2 may include identifying images that include an element that looks like a user-supplied drawing (See Fig. 1a, drawing of a computer). The search 3 may include identifying images that include the results of 1 and 2, where the person is to the right side of the computer. Finally, the search results are ranked. See col. 4, lines 32 to 50. As part of the ranking of search results, the individual objects appearing in the images may be ranked according to how closely the object corresponds to a user's drawing or to a particular device. Table 4 illustrates that for a single image I001, there are two objects (O101, O102) which resemble a computer. The object O101 resembles a computer more so than the object O102 and is ranked accordingly. An object O201 in a separate image I002 resembles a computer more so than it resembles a television. Thus, the similarities are made in comparison to some externally supplied reference, such as a user's drawing or other reference.

The Examiner contends that Li teaches each feature of claim 1. However, claim 1 describes calculating a similarity value between images based on similarity values between objects. The Examiner cites cols. 5-6 and Tables 3-4 of Li as teaching these aspects. However, cols. 5-6 merely describe analysis of image regions that occur within a single image. These include whether the objects appearing in the regions correspond to certain items. The Tables also describe analysis of objects in individual images against some reference point. However, that reference point is not another image. Thus, contrary to the Examiner's contention, Li does not teach comparison of similarity between images. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable for at least

this reason. Claims 8 and 15 include analogous, though not necessarily coextensive features, and therefore, claims 8 and 15 are also patentable for the reasons discussed for claim 1.

The remaining claims are patentable based on their dependency.

Claims 22-27 are added to describe features of the invention more particularly.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

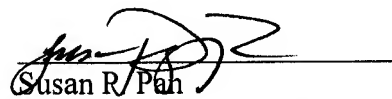
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Date: May 22, 2007